Dad was born in Scotland in November 1899. He lived at 90 Finlay Street in Glasgow for the first five years of years of his life. His father was a telegrapher for the Postal Service before immigrating to Canada to farm near the small town of Kelloe, in Manitoba. When Ray and I were in Glasgow we found this address, a lovely, large four story brick apartment, with multiple chimney pots. No doubt it would gave been a fine place a century ago.

He left school after grade eight at the urging of his grandmother who was very much a businesswoman. She had farms Manitoba, properties in Scotland (?) and properties and a bakeshop in Humboldt where dad was her delivery boy. He wanted to be a pilot, spent some time training in eastern Canada, but had to give it up due to poor eyesight. He once said he would like to have been a journalist, had he had more education. He came to Ethelton as a grain buyer in 1930, soon after the CNR tracks were laid, as a grain buyer, having learning the trade working with an uncle who bought grain in Kelloe, Manitoba and Riding Mountain. He bought grain for the United Grain Growers for ten years, then went farming. Mom said his Grandmother Brown bought the farm for him and he paid her in full in 1935, though his grandmother's will gives it to him. Throughout the depression, it's been said, grain buying was the best paid and most secure career on the prairies. He owned a little coupe, and I'm thinking it's the one that Uncle Nichol had in my time. He and mom married in 1936. She was working in the general store in Ethelton when they met.

Curling and reading were his strongest interests. He was a founding member of the Ethelton Curling Club; I remember that one of the sets of stones was 'ours' – his contribution to the newly formed club. I threw my first rock when he had me spare on his men's league, my rock hitting the boards halfway down, but I'm still throwing rocks, some sixty years since. No doubt Jean, Guy and Bob each had their turn as well.

Our little house was filled with CBC radio, including the Metropolitan Opera from New York every Saturday afternoon (sponsored by Mobil's Flying Red Horse). Saturday mornings Jean and I listened to the hit parade on another station, but when we saw dad coming someone would yell, "He's coming, turn it back to CBC!" There was always lots of reading material - the Saskatoon Star Phoenix, Melfort Journal, Western Producer, Life, National Geographic and Jack and Jill, as well as the two books monthly from the Book of the Month Club. There wasn't time for him to read in the summer and fall, so these would pile up for six months of the year and he would read during the long winter nights, with his stockinged feet on the oven door of the wood stove in the kitchen and the ever-present coffee and cigarettes.

That's *strong* coffee, available from 5AM until after midnight, with fresh grounds added every few hours to the six-cup aluminum pot on the stove; by midnight there would be three inches of grounds in the bottom.

That's *hand-rolled cigarettes.* His breaks from chores were opportunities to drink his killer coffee while rolling cigarettes, an art he perfected: First a long narrow sheet of cigarette paper is inserted in the roller and the tobacco carefully spread along its length. The glue on the edge of the paper is to be precisely moistened with spit and a dirty finger...turn a wheel and presto! A foot-long cigarette appears, which is carefully sectioned with a razor blade. Now it's time for the combination smoke and sleep, which

lasts as long as the cigarette, with we spectators holding our breath as the ash gets longer, more unstable and closer to his mouth, and finally falls. Dad wakes up with a start and it's back to work. (One of our children's best memory of Grandpa.)

He certainly made readers of us all, reading to us when we were very young, and coming home with books whenever he went to Regina or Saskatoon for Saskatchewan School Trustee Association meetings. We were enrolled in a lending library from the Legislative Offices in Regina. Books were mailed every two or three weeks, at no charge, complete with a pre-paid return-postage envelope. I was a member until I finished grade twelve. I recall hearing mom and dad discussing presents one Christmas; mom suggested a crokinole board. Dad gave one of his fine snorts and said, "You can't learn anything playing crokinole!"

One of the few stories of his childhood that he told was about a Sunday afternoon visit from the preacher, who found him reading the Boys' Own Annual and told him he should be reading the Bible instead. The Boys' Own Annual won out, perhaps hidden behind the Bible after that. Those beautifully bound books, full of Rudyard Kipling adventure stories were still in the house when I left home.

I remember dad as someone who knew his own mind, allowed others theirs, who lived by his own convictions, respected others' and who would never in all his life have done something simply because someone else was doing it. He contributed generously to the community, and was chair of the local school board for many years. His was the voice that might not otherwise been heard. He left others to see things their way, but took action when needed, especially with issues raised by upset parents. His motto could well have been "do no harm, never butter anyone up, or save them from themselves". He worked hard on the farm, preferring to spent time rather than money when he could. He did so patiently when things went well. When they didn't, his swearing was magnificent! After Uncle Nichol spent a summer with us, dad shocked us by adding uncle's "hell" to his own long litany.

****

Dena, my mom, was born at Meskanaw in 1912, the ninth of ten children. She didn't finish high school, but worked as a hired girl for several families, some she loved, some not. She had a few stories to tell: of the "dogs" that followed her home that were wolves, not dogs; of saving her brother's life when he fell into a well as she hung on to his overall straps until help arrived, of her father's death from kidney disease and his cries of pain. Her mother would put her between him and the wall where she would be safely out of the way. She wasn't two then.

This is her story of a death in one of the families she worked for: the husband had died, the minister had arrived, and the wife asked mom to bring tea into the parlour. Her timing was off, or perhaps precise. She opened the door just in time to see the new widow slapping the minister's face.

And "The Farstad Curse" – Grandma, widowed just six years after they arrived in Canada, had her branded cattle in a community pasture. They were stolen when they were ready for sale. Someone told her who the thief was. She confronted this man with

the words, "God, not I will deal with you!" He was, according to the story, dead within a year.

She worked at the Ethelton store, where she and dad met. They were married at the Knox Church manse in Saskatoon, and were met at the train in Ethelton, when they arrived home, by all their friends and neighbours, and a stoneboat hitched to a team of oxen for a ride from the station.

Mom was a runner, cleaning up at all the sports days. She competed provincially in track and field in Saskatoon. Impressing Joe Griffiths, he offered a place on the team if she could go to university – one of her dreams that could never be. But in her 40's she was still jumping barb wire fences instead of opening gates. Always eager for a challenge, she would tackle anything, turn anything into a tool if she needed one, and could imagine, enhance, design, create or annihilate anything as she pleased.

She worked with her engineer brother on the design of the new house, and with her forester brother in Creston to buy the lumber. No doubt she kept a sharp eye on the builders, and she had hammers ready for us kids to finish the flooring after the carpenters left for the day – we did! She moved a kitchen wall soon after we moved in, and recruited us to help her with the wallboard and mudding. She finished the interior walls with something called Dramex. Whatever it was, it was indestructible, because it's still there today; textured, it was as hard as steel: it could take the skin off your elbows if you were careless or speeding down the stairs. When the contractor's helper didn't show up, she helped with the stucco. When it needed to be painted, she mixed a concoction of unslaked lime and other chemicals, and had me on a very long ladder, and her passing the paint out the nearest up stair window.

On her many trips to Vancouver she enrolled in any course she could find – watercolours, oils, pastels, cake decorating, copper tooling, making hats, gloves, fabric flowers and lampshades. Most entertaining were the dress forms she and her two sisters made in 1947, and we three kids were there to see them evolve. They each put on a shirt, then pasted layers and layers of brown butcher tape over their bodies, neck to hips. When each form was dry, they slit each other's down the back, exited, taped it back together and *viola*! Each had their own manikin. Dad got quite a kick out of that thing when it arrived on the train, packed carefully in a box!

There was hardly a craft she didn't take up. She had that restless inner artist, and eventually had the time and money to buy supplies and take art lessons, at a University of Saskatchewan Summer School of Art, in Vancouver and other places. Painting was her love; we have no idea how many of her paintings are out there - perhaps hundreds? She was an art instructor with the Community College.

Her skills and creations were shared generously for every tea, shower or wedding, and she had the gift of adding grace notes to her work: the evening before our wedding she went off in the truck up into the hills and came back with pails of ferns. The front of the church was filled with potted ferns and huge bouquets of red and pink peonies. It was stunning.

****

I was born at my Grandmother's farm near Meskanaw, in the early morning of September 11, 1939, a Monday, unusually cold, with a fierce wind stripping the trees of their leaves. A midwife, Grandma had brought many babies into the world. There that morning besides dad, and Jean, who was almost three, were my two aunts, Emma (later Kae), Annie (later Hazel) and cousins Sheila, Iris (later Murrill), Wesley (later Larry) and Earl. This need some explaining: Kae believed in numerology along with other esoteric things, as did mom and Hazel. It was Kae who named me Lucill-with-no-'e', presumably to bring me "balance, harmony, health, lofty goals and great accomplishments". Good for her for trying! I recall a telegram arriving just after Guy's birth, from Kae, with the short message "suggest Lance or Guy." Jean and Bob were obviously born perfect.

At ten o'clock the night before I was born, the Canadian Parliament declared war on Germany, and the announcement was made the next morning. In that overnight gap, the Depression that had plagued the country for ten years ended immediately. There was an instant demand for everything: soldiers, seamen, aviators, spies, nurses, doctors, labourers, air bases, coal, gas, food, raw materials, ships, planes, tanks, uniforms, ammunition...everything, even a little girl.

Bob was born in the hospital in Melfort three years later. Jean and I spent the ten days at Grandma's then. My only memory is being the little kid who wanted to do what the older adventurous girls were doing – jumping of the closet into to piles of quilts; Sheila put me up on top but Aunt Kae arrived just in time to 'save' me; I was devastated.

Earl and Larry enlisted as soon as they were old enough. Earl was in the air force stationed in eastern Canada, and Larry was in the army, in a tank battalion, crossing the Rhine at the end of the war, participating in the opening the concentration camps.

I don't remember much about the war, except Earl's flashlight. He let me shine it into the cellar; I thought he was giving it to me, and I wasn't going to give it up. Mom explained that he would need it in the war so I had to surrender. I recall Earl rolling dad's truck driving to the station on the day he left. If I remember the story, his explanation was that he had to lean over to hear what our hard-of-hearing hired man was saying, and he lost control. Dad's version was "speeding" – he heard the train whistle and knew they were seriously late. I don't know the end of this story! Did the agent hold the train? Did Earl bolt to the station preferring war to his uncle's wrath and leave Jimmy holding the bag?

Many things were rationed during the war, including sugar, so my first taste of candies was when I was perhaps five. I had gobbled up all but one when someone showed me that they were little black liquorice babies.

The war ended the year I was five. There was a parade and celebration on V.E. Day, (Victory in Europe) in Ethelton, and another on VJ Day (Victory in Japan), which followed three months later. I asked mom which way Japan was, and made a pile of logs and planks against a rail fence, climbed up and looked to the south-west hoping to see the mushroom cloud people were talking about. My pile was a little short.

****

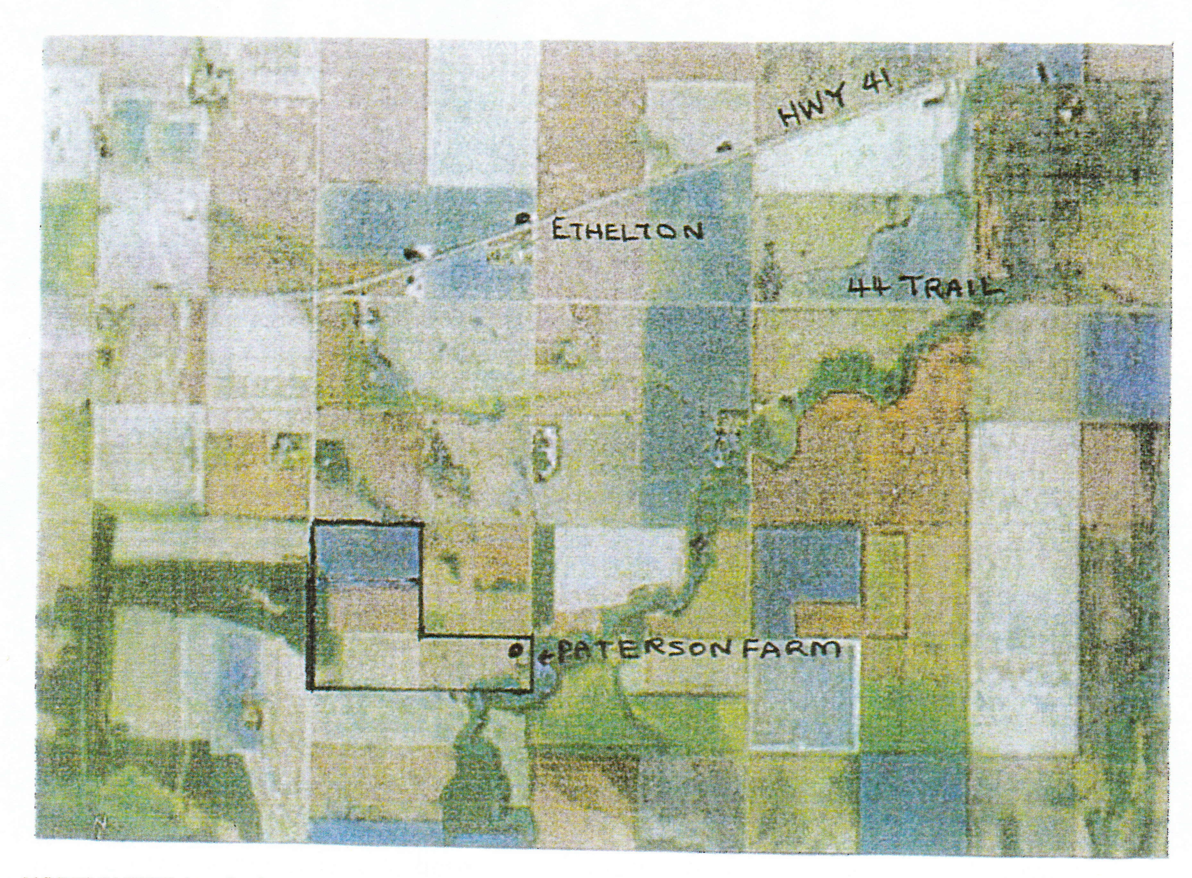
The old house, built by previous owners, was a two-room 10'x12' shack, clad with weather-worn cedar, which plagued us with nasty slivers when we brushed against it. Attached was a lean-to, perhaps 8'x10' in size. The living room held a fold-down sofa that was our parents' bed, a stand-alone cupboard, a table, and a small built-in cabinet and bookshelf, famous for my infamous act of taking my mother's diamond ring. I asked if I could have a ring. She said "someday." I took it. Psychologically savvy, she asked me where I would put a ring if I had one. I pointed to the high bookshelf, and there she found her ring behind the books. I see now what a big deal that was – few brides in the thirties had a diamond engagement ring. I still remember the drama unfolding, with the energy of the ring buzzing around me.

A small metal wood stove heated the uninsulated house in the winter. In the lean-to were the cook stove, wood box, sink, wash tub, and a pail of drinking water. Everyone, including company, drank from the dipper in the pail. Drinking water was carried from the well at the bottom of the hill, and household and garden water was collected from the eaves into a large tank. Laundry was done by hand, and in the winter the laundry was spread outside on the fences and bushes, brought in frozen, and hung on clotheslines. Dad's frozen long-johns were our weekly comedy show.

The attic, used for storage, offered a view of blue sky around the brick chimney when we looked up through the trap door. There was no insulation at all in this house – we're looking at serious cold here! We could scrape frost of the bedroom wall. The dirt cellar, accessed by a trap door underneath the table was the 1930's version of a refrigerator. Because we were kept safely away from it, going down there was an adventure.

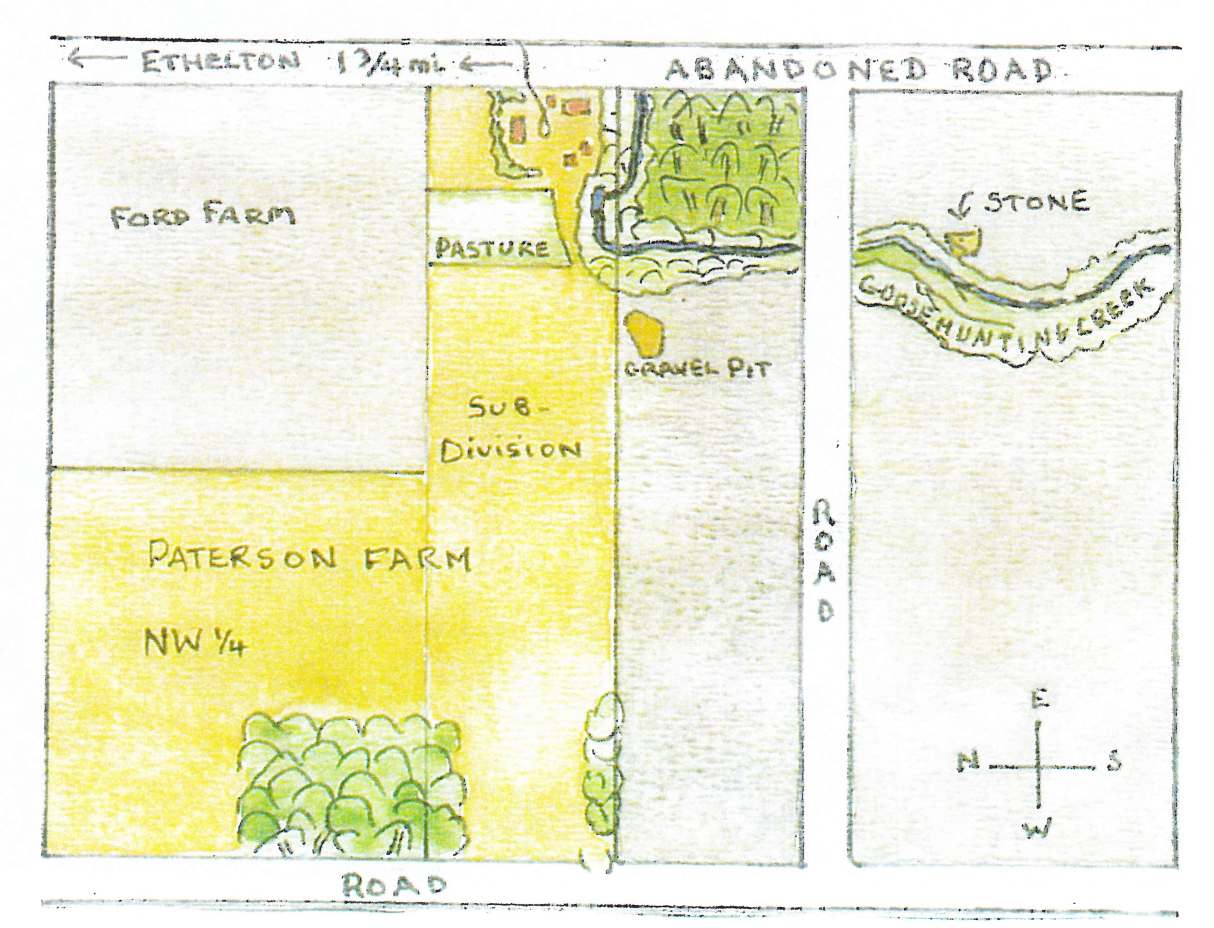
The bedroom was just large enough to hold a double bed and a child-sized metal crib. Above the crib was a three-door cabinet. A closet hung in the narrow space between the bed and the wall, and the 'toilet' was under the crib. This was also our playroom – mom fastened sheets to the overhead cabinet, put the ironing board across the ends of the crib, and we had a three-level playhouse, one level for each of us. The bed, which had a never-washed heavy feather tick was another play-place. Memories from the quilt - playing with paper dolls; fighting for space; lying there bored when Jean and mom had the chicken-box and I didn't; dad reading to us at bed time; he comforting me when I was sick, by sucking smoke from his pipe and blowing it in my ears to ease the pain. I ended up in hospital and had my tonsils and adenoids removed; maybe it was the smoke.

Inside our little house we had dolls, puzzles, crayons, and a view master with amazing (to us) pictures of the Swiss Alps, the Oregon Caves, Crater Lake and Yellowstone; for dad, everything had to be educational. We had one jigsaw puzzle which we did over and over; I can still see that snowy mountain, the little cabin and its warm window shining in the dusk. Family rule: the window piece went in last. Jean and I made scrap books, mom referring when we both wanted the same pictures such as Mobil's Flying Red Horse. She saved cartoons from *Saturday Evening Post* and, and I liked the colourful picture and ads from *Life Magazine*. We had our own monthly magazine, *Jack and Jill.* Our glue was a mix of flour and water.



NORTHWEST ¼- SECTION 2 – TOWNSHIP 44 RANGE - 21 WEST OF THE SECOND MERIDIAN

LOCATION: 52° 45′ N 104° – 55′ W ELEVATION: WEST END 507; FARMYARD 485



North

Farstad Homestead

Morrison Farm

Meskanaw

Ethelton

EAST

PATERSON FARM

Google earth

The farm I lived on was the perfect place to spend a childhood. It was safe: there was no danger of being eaten by wild animals, kidnapped by strangers or hit by cars. But it did offer thrilling risks and hazards - the ravine and creek where you could drown, trees to fall out of, machinery, huge snow banks that could have suffocated all three of us of us at once, roofs to fall from, and, always, a bad-tempered Jersey bull. There was the quicksand that dad told us about, but he never told us where it was - his way of keeping us wary? Fortunately we never found it. If we were ever told to be careful, I don't remember; his phrase was 'mind the bull' or 'mind the creek'. We could roam alone whenever and wherever, and we did, though I never went down the hill in the dark (except in the winter when we had to tend the fire box in the water trough, and we could see things against the snow.) After dark on the farm it was just a coal-oil lantern, the stars and a moon.

It was one of the bulls, Jerry or Roland that almost got me when dad sent me to bring in the cows for milking. Half way home the bull charged, and I had just enough time to slip under a fence. The herd bolted back into the trees at the west end. When they calmed down I headed them toward the barnyard, a mile away, hoping the bull would behave. There was no way I was going home without the cattle – I bet on the bull, not my dad!

Then there was an incident that so scared me that I never told anyone about it. Thinking of it still gives me goose bumps. I was around nine; Bob and I were chasing each other through the summer fallow, bare-footed, after a heavy rain, enjoying the mud, sliding and splashing around. I ran ahead, and then circled back to chase him. Several days later when the field was dry, I was out there again. Following my tracks I saw that I was within a yard of one the holes that had been drilled for the hydro poles. If I had gone a few steps farther I could have disappeared into it. Forever. Having survived those perils, I'm here to tell the stories of growing up in the 40's and 50's on a Saskatchewan farm.

****

Dad's grandmother, Jane Paton Brown, bought the farm, and he bought it from her. She was a business woman with properties and a business, perhaps a pottery factory, in Glasgow, and farms in Manitoba. She also had a house and a bakery in Humboldt, where dad, as a boy, delivered bread for her. She travelled as her businesses demanded, including trips to Scotland (I think). Her husband was not well; he died in the 1890's and she in 1936.

Her will reads," I give, and devise, and bequeath the northwest quarter section (etc, etc) and Legal subdivision Five, Six, Seven and Eight of said section Two....to my grandson John Paterson absolutely." She also left farms that she owned in Manitoba to her two of her daughters, whose husbands were farming them, and another farm to another daughter and son, jointly. Dad was the only grandchild of five to be named in the will. Perhaps she had helped his four siblings earlier.

The sub-divisions mentioned in the will explain the unusual layout of the farm. Normally, prairie farms were square if a section or quarter-section in size, and rectangular if a half section. The farm is an L-shape because of the sub-division; an agreement had been made between two previous owners for an arrangement that gave both farms access to the Goosehunting Creek.

******

Here we played, explored, worked, and learned, often the hard way. Because there were no neighbours within five or six miles, the land to the south offered us a wilderness. Below the barn was the line fence and the remains of a bridge. Crawling under the fence offered the thrill of trespassing, knowing we'd never be caught. Then we had to face the bridge, crossing a rubble of rotting timbers. The banks were steep and the water deep and dark (manure-coloured, actually). Crossing was always a bit scary, but once over, there were sun-warmed strawberries on the clay cut-banks, wild rhubarb, nettles, open fields, and wooded areas. We could follow the creek a mile or so upstream to 'the stone', a large erratic that was partially exposed on the brow of the ravine, or hike along another abandoned road that ran east-west; there were no signs of humans, except out own footprints. Because the south road had been abandoned years ago, the farm was at a dead end. The occasional traveller would show up, confused and annoyed, having to backtrack a few miles north to find his way south.

There were natural areas that were never broken, the ravine, the west end where we picked hazel nuts and cranberries, and parts the adjacent farms where no one lived. There were wild places to explore. It wasn't just a playground; almost every place and activity had potential for excitement and risk......the muddy swimming hole where the cattle drank (and dumped!) ..... rafting (Uncle Nichol built us a wonderful raft)..... going down that steep hill on crude cross-country skis, also made by Uncle Nichol; who knew we should have been shown how to use them? .....or, worse, riding down on the axle of a set of wheels, on shovels, or cardboard boxes...try to avoid the cribbing of the well on any of those! Mom's last words as we headed to the ravine with our sleds were "don't hit the well!" We never did. We climbed trees and haystacks, played on any roof we could reach, and on the slippery banks of the icy creek when it was in full flood.

We experienced the energies of sun, earth, seasons, weather patterns, storms and utter darkness. We knew how it felt to be surrounded by forest or running water, or exposed beyond the shelterbelt to winter storms. We could lie under the stars with no artificial light at all, or under a full moon, and hear the coyotes howl.

Such a life was an education in natural history. We knew the soils - loam, clay or humus, their textures and smells, and the manifestations of snow, fresh, old, dry, wet or wind-blown - how it reacted as we walked on the banks, how it settled on the contours of the land, depending on the winds, and its many colors, changing with atmosphere, slant of light, time of day and season We knew the trees, shrubs, wild flower, birds, insects, pests, crops, grasses, and weeds, what was edible, what wasn't and what was poisonous. We watched sky, wind, trees and animals to predict the weather. Shadows, clouds, slant and color of light, winds and weather were our big screen. As a flatlander I saw the world as a grid, fixed to the cardinal directions – don't ask me about left or right!

****

The farm was our playground. A creek and a network of cow paths took us everywhere through the ravine. Dad told us about a single birch clump on the farm, but never said where; it took us a few years of hunting to find it. There were few wild animals. At one time there was a bounty on gopher tails and crows' legs, but we never

trafficked in such things. Pouring water down gopher holes or wrecking nests to terrorize crows, however, was entertainment. There were mice, but no rats – mom being generous with the warfarin. Deer were rare. Coyotes howled on winter nights just below the garden. Dad claimed to have seen bear tracks in that same place and I believed him. A lynx appeared at the rim of the ravine soon after dad died, when she was alone; Mom said she "politely told it to leave because it wasn't welcome."

We climbed trees, hiked the many trails and visited our favourite trees, rocks, meadows and places such as the old limestone quarry, the beaver dam, springs, and, one summer, a rotting cow carcass!

The swimming hole, perhaps dug out by former owners, was kept full by a makeshift dam. Swimming, rafting, repairing the bridge and dam, and hauling rocks to make waterfalls, kept us busy. We caught minnows, tadpoles, frogs and dragon flies. We laid in the sun and the soft grass among the willows. Swimming was good in July; by then clear spring water had replaced the muddy spring run-off. In August the flow diminished and the swimming hole became a mud-hole, clogged with algae, cattle droppings and dying fish. However, in the fall, after the first heavy frost, the creek would suddenly fill with clear cold water. Dad's explanation was that after the leaves freeze, the trees no longer take up water, and the springs flow again.

A gravel pit nearby was a favourite destination. We'd watch the bulldozers and conveyer belts in the pit and the trucks rolled right past the house. When they hit fine sand and a spring, the municipality closed the pit. Sheltered from the wind and warmed by the sun, it became our spa. I once arrived to find a blue heron standing in the spring. I let him enjoy it for the afternoon. On the hillside below the pit, at another spring we found strange looking rocks we were sure we had found meteorites. Instead of laughing at us, dad encouraged us to send them to the University for analysis. They weren't meteorites, but we were excited to get a reply, telling us all about them.

Playing Cowboys and Indians wasn't politically incorrect in those days. Bob had a cap gun and we made our own bows and arrows; turkey feathers and corrugated cardboard made fine headdresses. Playhouses were for girls only. We'd find a space in the bushes, rake leaves and pull weeds to make a nice dirt floor. Gaps between trees were our rooms. We'd foray for stumps, boards and boxes for furniture. The dump on the hillside was our 'Bed, Bath and Beyond'. Broken chairs, leaky milk pails, cracked dishes, perhaps a battered saucepan were added. A broken clock, a mirror or tattered blanket was a status item. One summer we had a real telephone in our playhouse, but some visiting adult saw it, reported it to the telephone company, and we lost it.

****

Winter afternoons were spent playing on the snow banks that formed below the rim of the ravine. Base to top they seemed huge, but were likely only four feet or so high. We made snow caves, snow tunnels, snow stairs, and snow funnels that whisked into the bushes below. Getting up the vertical banks was a challenge, but the ride down was worth it. We'd come home at dusk, cold and covered with snow. Our parents seemed confident of our safety, no matter where we were or what we were doing. The only rule I remember was no 'playing on the sheaf-stacks', and that was for concern for the sheaves, not us.

Barnyard buildings were scattered here and there. The chicken house was a small, low building on the edge of the ravine. Inside were cubicles for the nests, lined with straw. Gathering eggs meant stepping into the hot smell of hens, dust, dander and lice to reach underneath the hens and snatch the warm eggs, quickly, to avoid vicious attacks. The exterior of the building was finished with branches nailed to the two-by-fours, and covered by some kind of stucco which I suspect it was made of lime, water and manure. Chunks of this mortar had fallen off and sparrows nested in the holes. Fun on the farm in the forties: raid the nests; smash the eggs and the naked, doomed babies. Or, better still, grab the fledglings, hold them tight in your fist, windmill your arms around and around and around, then open your hand: the dizzy birds flied like drunken sailors!

The 'Shack', as we called it, had been a cozy home for cousin Earl and his friend when they stayed there while going to high school in Ethelton. They kept me away with stories of the bats that would make a nest in my hair if I ever went in there. Uncle Nichol worked out of the shack when he kept bees. It was next used for plucking chickens, full of the smell of hot wet feathers, and finally a shop.

The barn was Norwegian stave-style, with walls built with upright logs lodged in the ground. It too, was plastered with that same suspect stucco. There were stalls for ten cows, two horses, a bull, and a pen for the calves.

That meant tons of manure, which provided rich soil for gardens and fields. It provided a huge smell too. But it was the solution for mosquitoes, which were a problem for cattle as well us. Setting it on fire created a dense smoke that drugged them. The smell, bad as it was, was better than being bitten. Weeding the vegetable garden, we'd each built a fire in a metal jam can, feed it with damp grass to keep it smouldering and carry it along as we worked down the rows.

There was always a big woodpile. Dad bought firewood from a farmer from "the bush" who harvested it from the forest. He brought it tree-size, on his horse-drawn sleigh with branches lopped, It needed a year to dry, and was later cut to cook-stove size length with a circular saw, powered off the tractor. It was used in the house, the shack, and in the under-water stove in the water tank at the bottom of the hill, where the cattle drank.

****

There were chores for all. The cattle, purebred Jerseys, known for their rich cream, were milked by hand morning and night. The cream was separated from the milk with a complicated hand-driven separator which needed careful washing of all its many pieces. Neighbours would arrive, especially on Sunday mornings, with their mason jars to buy cream. The milk was discarded and the cream shipped in five gallon stainless steel cans to the creamery in Melfort, by train. Since it took several days to collect five gallons of cream, it was kept cool in the summer by suspending the cans down a well. Though it was labour-intensive, it was good cash crop. While I was in University dad would send a cream cheque every once in a while, averaging around eight dollars, and that would keep me going for a quite a while.

Chickens and turkeys – one year we had around a thousand - kept us busy from May to the end of December. Day-old chicks would arrive, on the train. The first chore was to take each chick out of the cardboxes, flip off the little callus on the tip of their beaks (used to break the shell) and dip each beak into the food and water. They lived a few weeks in a granary under a heated canopy before being moved to outdoor pens, where they needed tons of food and water. We kids hauled water in 45 gallon barrels on the horse-drawn stone boat. When the horses bolted (or tried, old geezers) the barrels full of water would go rolling down the hill.

It's interesting that there was, then, no health inspectors checking the premises or the way the milk, cream and poultry were handled. There were a few regulations but it was assumed that everyone followed them. I believe the cows had to be tested occasionally for something – perhaps milk fever? The words 'food poisoning' were never heard, or we were all immune.

****

By December 24th all the poultry was gone, slaughtered by dad, and plucked by mom, a hired neighbour, and whichever kid was chosen to stay home from school for the day. The carcasses were chilled, wrapped in kraft paper, sewn into burlap bags, and shipped by train. Most went to butcher shops in Flin Flon, Manitoba. The CNR bought oven-ready turkeys for staff at headquarters in Toronto and in the Bessbourough Hotel, as did a car dealership in Saskatoon. Though Christmas was an afterthought in our house, we always had neighbours in for Christmas dinner - turkey, of course. There were lots of presents from our parents, mom's Vancouver family, who also sent hand-me-down clothes from our older cousins, and Aunt Jean Paterson. Dad hoarded the delicious Scottish shortbread she made.

Just as our turkey 'run' was ending, the school concert was looming. Costumes must have riled many a mother. One year Jean and I were in a (tacky) drill, to the tune of a song called" My Sweet Little Alice Blue Gown." Well, Alice's gown was a long skirt and bodice, made with rows and rows of crimped blue crepe paper sown onto fabric. Mom, working until midnight to get the poultry ready for the morning train, finished the gowns through the night. She was not impressed! I don't know whether I felt more embarrassed or guilty doing that silly dance.

The school concert was *the* event of the season. It took all December to prepare, and everyone had a part to learn. We'd hike from the school to the hall in town for practices and spent the whole day there. Arriving before the teacher in the morning we had no supervision. Fun! We'd hang around the wood stove until we got warmed up. The stove, made from 45-gallon drum, sitting horizontal on its welded legs, with a hinged door welded on one end, was a fine gathering place. We'd pull up the benches and rest our cold feet on it until we could smell our boots burning. The rest of the building, however, remained cold as ice. We'd shiver as we through our lines, and eat frozen sandwiches for lunch.

But it was all a blast, and an opportunity for us youngsters to meet the high school crowd and learn a few things. I remember Ray and his friends showing off doing Tarzan tricks on the overhead steel support rods. When not on stage we took advantage

of being out of the teacher's range. The basement, the three rooms in the wings and the dark passage behind the stage were places she couldn't supervise without things on stage going awry. After the concert each of us got a bag of candy and a Japanese orange, from Santa, whom we all knew, of course, was Bill Morrison. We drew names, so everyone got a present, as well. After the concert the benches were pushed aside, the orchestra arrived and the dance began.

****

Life was ordered by the seasons. Because the changes are so dramatic on the prairies, each was anticipated with excitement, as well as hopes and fear. Each had its routines, rewards and risks. Work, play, food, transportation, weather, plants, animals, dusk and dawn, everything, changed with the seasons. No occupation offered variety like mixed farming.

When weather didn't permit seeding, haying or harvesting, there were always repairs to equipment and buildings. Fences and gates of three-strand barb wire needed to be checked regularly. Leaving one open was something you wouldn't want to be accused of. We learned to keep an eye on fences; straying cattle halted anything else that was going on: you didn't want them in the neighbours' crop, on the road, or in the wrong field. A cow eating in an alfalfa crop would become bloated and die almost immediately. I recall dad stabbing a cow with a pitch fork so save its life because he didn't have time to go to the house to get the device used for that operation.

A good year was spring rains coming at the right time, a good growing season, a long dry fall for harvest, and an open winter. Risks were late frosts in spring, and early ones in the fall, a spring run-off too early or too late, a summer too wet or too dry, and a winter with too much snow or not enough, and high seed prices in spring and low grain prices in the fall.

Spring was exciting: that first patch of dirt, and the appearance of geese, frog's eggs, pussy willows, robins, dandelions, calves and lost toys. It was the flood that fascinated me, when the entire ravine was a torrent of ice floes, branches and other debris. I'd check it in the morning and again after school. I risked my life going down to the water's edge, where the icy bank was steep and the flow fast. When it subsided we had to pump the well dry over and over until the muddy floodwater was replaced by the clear spring water and we could drink it again.

Summers seemed long and lazy, with time to hike, picnic, watch the clouds and stars, and play in the long dusk, dancing with our lanky shadows. The late sunny evenings were divine. Ours was the only farm that ran on Daylight Saving Time. It had been instituted during the war, apparently to increase production, and dad thought it a good idea. For us school started at ten o'clock. For dad, his kids had an extra hour every morning to weed the garden. It didn't work so well for mom; she'd get home "late" from her afternoon meetings.

There was no such thing as summer holidays, only the occasional small trip. Dad took us once to Fishing Lake for a picnic. A rough spot in the road nearly tossed us out of the back of the truck. That day I ran across a small stream by the lake and found myself

sinking up to my knees in sand. Was it quicksand? I was scared, but never told anyone. When Jean and I went there once with the neighbours, the Fords, in their Ford car, which had no brakes, Bart had to hit the ditch to avoid a collision. Mrs. Ford fainted; I scraped my chin because I was the one standing in the crowded back seat. Everyone else was fine. My last to this lake was with Ray when we were dating –

Berry picking was a summer outing; mom would take the truck, pick up Mrs. Ford, and we'd head to the best spots, around the countryside. With cream cans, milk pails, lunch and kids piled in the back of the truck Mom would back the truck into the bushes so we could reach the highest branches.

She was an anxious driver because she had once hit a tree, but her determination prevailed. She liked to visit her old school friends, two Cree women, sisters, Edith Combs and Hazel Hourie. I liked to go along to play with Edith's children, Dale and Donna; and I loved Hazel's spotless log house and her brother who sang and played a guitar. Those trips were adventures, no longer than five miles from home.

****

Fall had an undercurrent of anxiety because grain had to be harvested dry. Every day was a race to get as much off as possible before dewfall. Every week was a race against rain or snow. Every hour counted and everyone worked, housekeeping, cooking, milking and separating, feeding the poultry, taking meals to the fields, and harvesting the garden, which ripened along with the crops.

Harvest had its perks for kids: skipping school, riding on the combine or in the truck, getting a share of the food sent out to the fields, and just getting away with things. Each fall we grew into new responsibilities, cooking, feeding the poultry, driving the truck, shovelling in the granaries, or picking up other chores. Best of all was the burning of the windrows of straw when the combining was done. It was done after dusk to be able to see where the fire was spreading. Dad was on the tractor and cultivator to manage the perimeters, and we leaped from row to row, with pitchforks, spreading the flames. From our high vantage at the west end we could the many fires around the countryside. It was always exciting, like some atavistic ritual.

Mom worked hard to preserve a year's supply of vegetables and fruits: five-gallon crock of sauerkraut fermenting in the little kitchen, Mason jars by the dozens filled with fruit and vegetables, mom's canning machine that was great improvement for a few years, until a freezer unit opened in Melfort renting individual boxes, and eventually, power came to our area - a deep freeze was the first purchase. That freezer was still in the basement of the house last time I was there. So, it ran for at least thirty years.

****

Winter made all the chores harder, but being out every day made was a routine regardless of the temperature. Horses and cattle were watered at the well. Manure was

hauled out daily and hay and straw brought in. The horses, May and Dan, old and laid back, did all the hauling with a hayrack, a wagon box, both on runners, or the stone boat.

The stoneboat was a platform just a few inches off the ground, on skids. I suppose it was invented by settlers for clearing stones off their land. By design, it floated, and it could never upset. With tractor or horses it was used to haul just about anything, manure, barrels of water, produce from the garden, fence posts, hay, sheaves, and families visiting neighbours. It was perfect for winter chores and during spring break-up.

Our responsibilities were hauling wood in and ashes out; bringing drinking water from the well in the ravine; filling the water trough at the well; hauling in snow and packing it into a boiler on the stove (this was our hot water system), and taking out the waste water and garbage. Few days were to cold to go out, for work or play.

The worst year was 1955-56, long, cold, windy, with heavy snowfalls one after another. Banks of snow were so high we could skim the telephone lines as we walked along. That winter we kids had to stop at the post office for the mail and at the store for the groceries mom had called in for. It was all packed into the empty cream can we picked up at the train station, and we carried or dragged it home. That winter municipal rotary plough was taxed to the limit. The road became a tunnel-like path with six foot walls along each side. After each blow it filled it and farmers were out with shovels to break up the snow ahead of the plough. Our treed lane was packed too heavily for the plough, so fences were opened and the plough came in, late one night, through the fields.

****

Ahhh, school years! Our elementary school was a one-room building. With grades one to eight, it would have been a hand full for teachers. There was a barn, a big grassy playground, swings, a teeter-totter, and a ball diamond. There were two outdoor toilets, and girls had inside privileges in winter. Maybe the boys did to – I never checked. Inside were two cloakrooms, a wood/coal furnace in the basement, but no electricity or running water. I was there for grades one to four, after which an addition was built to the high school in town.

We walked the first quarter mile, and rode with the neighbour boys. Most of those years they drove a team of horses. In summer it was a buggy or a 'democrat', which was a wagon with two shallow boxes on springs set high above the wheels.

Winter options included wagon box, cutter or small caboose complete benches, a wood stove, a sliding glass front window, back windows, and two exits. There was space (cramped) for 10 passengers, and storage for firewood, a can of coal oil, as many lunch kits as kids, firewood, and sheaves for the horses' noon meal.

The cutter (think a Santa's sleigh made of rough heavy planks.), because it offered no shelter from the wind it came with a white and black cowhide robe, donated unwillingly by some old Holstein.

Eventually the oldest son got a truck. Over the years fifteen children rode, biked, ran, or walked that road. Our distance to school: 1 ¾ miles.

There was no such thing as supervision during lunch or recess. The best game ever was Anti-Anti-I-Over. It requires two equal teams, any number of players, a baseball, ball gloves if available, and one barn. Team One throws the ball over the barn roof. If any player on Team Two catches it, the entire Team Two swarms around the barn, running in both directions, tagging Team One players. All tagged players join Team Two. The game ends when one of the teams is decimated. It sounds like something Attila the Hun might have invented.

Next best fun was our wood houses. In the fall a year's supply of firewood was piled in the grounds. On the first day of school we started building our houses of firewood, breaking up into little cliques of girls or boys. We made cornerstones, and filled in the walls with logs about fifteen inches long and five inches in diameter. We made long hallways that turned back on each other leading to the doorways. From somewhere planks and cardboard for roofing appeared. It was a prototype condominium project, because we shared walls. But we weren't a friendly community; there were jealousies and bad blood around shared walls - vandalism, snitching, peeping through gaps, and pushing logs into someone else's room. Never did a teacher or parent set foot (knees?) in any house to see what was happening during noon and recess. Nothing ever was.

I was a battered child at school. Twice. First by Thelma, the biggest girl. While she was warming up for a ball game I was daydreaming, and she got me on the temple with a bat. I remember the silly-putty feeling as I melted down to the ground. Just a few days before or after that, I was thrown out of the buggy. It was near Halloween and the boys had strewn toilet paper on the trees along the road. The horses, spooked, bolted and the buggy rolled into the ditch at the school gate. The story I was told was that everyone else bailed out while I was still standing behind the seat, holding on for dear life... for a while I wore two bandages, one on each temple.

I got in trouble on the first day in grade one. It was the clock. I'd never seen Roman Numerals, or such a big clock face. But it was minute hand that made me whistle out loud in surprise – I had never seen a clock that could move fast! Then there was the glue incident in grade three: I was using the rubber top on the glue bottle to spread the glue. Mrs. Brown got on my case for using too much glue. I knew I wasn't 'using' glue; I was just 'spreading glue.' So I kept spreading while she kept getting madder and madder. She snatched the bottle away. If she thought me disobedient, I thought her just dumb.

I couldn't forgive her for the monogram art project in grade four. We were each to design our own monogram. Right off the bat I was handicapped. With no middle name I had only two letters to work with – what could I possibly do with just an 'L' and a 'P'? Nothing! My nemesis, Anne, who had A, E and A, made an exquisite symmetrically diamond shaped monogram; what's more, she had the teacher's help and I didn't. I concluded that Mrs. Brown already knew I was a loser. Fifty-some years later I made seventeen smashing monograms made with an L and a P – eat your heart out, Anne!

My teachers worked to keep me busy: Jean had taught me the alphabet when she was in grade one and I soon learned to read by sounding out letters. One advantage

of a one room school is that you can follow the older classes' lessons, read their books and take a shot at their tests which were written on the blackboard. I did flashcards with the younger grades and put things on the blackboard for the teacher.

My grade five teacher had me doing '40's style photocopying'. Believe it: fill a cake pan with clear gelatine; print the test questions on paper the same size as the pan using a special purple pencil; press the printed side on to the gelatine and it absorbs the purple ink; remove this sheet of paper, press a blank piece of paper on the gelatine and the printing transfers on to it; make only one for each pupil, gelatine, paper and ink cost money.

Every school had its Red Cross club, and ours lasted as long as I was in elementary school. We learned proper parliamentary procedure, were nominated and voted in for offices. We brought our pennies for the Red Cross Box, read everything in the Junior Red Cross Magazine, and raised money with box socials. The boys bid on the girls lunches and I hated the wait to find out which boy I'd have to share my lunch with. Every November we sold poppies to all the neighbours and our parents paid for the rest.

I spent four years in that one room school, which was a quarter mile from town. In 1949 it was closed and an addition was added to the high school in town. Enrolment was low, twenty-one students in twelve grades. Grade seven was the year of the snowball incident, the second time I got in trouble at school. One of my friends recruited me into a caper - to drop a snowball on "Corn Syrup's" head, for no motive that I was aware of. But I signed on anyway. The plan was to send a lackey into the curling rink during noon hour to tell Corn Syrup (a high school guy) someone outside wants to talk to him. Everything is set to go: she and I wait over the door on the snowbanks, armed with snowballs.... the door opens... I drop our ammo... but it's the principal's head! Told to report to him after school we spend the afternoon imagining the strap. But it gets worse.....she bolts as soon as school is out, so I do the same. Sobbing and red-eyed, we show up the next morning and tell him the whole story. He believes us and we are pardoned.

I had four teachers in high school; two were exceptionally good, the others exceptionally bad. My grade seven teacher (he of the snowball) was excellent. My grade eight teacher was essentially clueless and at our mercy. We moved our desks to the cloakrooms; we wandered around the room at will. We lined up the fifteen desks into three rows of five and wired them together. To leave our desks we walked on each others desk tops. An unusually number of pencil leads broke during that caper and many students were thirsty. The sad thing, really, was that this teacher said or did nothing; eventually we put our desks back were they belonged. One day he sent us home at noon because he had to go to court as a witness of an accident. When we arrived at home, dad (school board chair) barrelled into town thinking it was a mutiny.

We spent recesses playing volleyball and softball, or hanging out in the basement. There we had the options of playing table tennis or listening to the three LP's we had. By recruiting some of the elementary kids we were able to have a bonspiel each winter. We competed in high school bonspiels and track meets. I got to the unit track finals, taking the early train to Meskanaw toting a javelin, which I stowed in the baggage car. I advanced that year to the zones, competing in Melfort.

My graduation mates were the same two kids I started out with. In the interim two other boys were briefly in our grade, and one girl moved away. There was no graduation fanfare – we just walked out as usual after getting our report cards. From a 2012 perspective high school doesn't look so good. If I had had needed to work for my grades who knows, I might have made something of myself.

****

I'd like to have a hot section about teen age adventures, but I was born in the wrong era. The post-war years for my generation were 'work hard and get ahead before the next depression hits' – which we did, and it didn't.

*One Easter a friend and I took the train to Saskatoon for a Horse Show. We invited another friend because she had connections for a place to stay, but she bailed out at the last minute. No problem, my friend had an older sister there. However, sister's husband was cramming for finals and we weren't welcome. We spent the day walking around the city, over the bridges and downtown. We hung around the Bessborough, washing our dirty feet in the women's washroom with its gold-plated faucets. What gall! We showed up at our missing friend's parents' home – they didn't know us - and stayed the night. Again, what gall! After the show we took the midnight train home.

*Same friend - we decided to hitchhike to her other sister's home in Meskanaw, an eight mile walk. Her brother drove us the first few miles and we walked the rest on the CNR tracks. We hung around the McCloy Creek Bridge for the day with some kids we knew; I don't remember how we got home.

*Another visit to Meskanaw included an after-hours visit to the poolroom; one of the boys we were with knew where the key was kept. In those days women, let alone girls, wouldn't even walk on the same side of the street as the poolroom.

In my first year of high school the Meskanaw high school was closed because of low enrolment, and six or seven of those students were bussed to Ethelton; the 'bus' being a small Ford truck with a canopy on the back, driven by "Flash Gordon", so named because he drove so slow. These students added some badly needed edginess to our little Presbyterian community. Newcomers were rare in our little town.

*Halloweens were great fun. Before any of the crowd could drive we went on foot, stopping at all the neighbours in spite of snow. I watched an outdoor toilet go over, and helped up right it next morning, but I never pushed one over. I was there when eggs were thrown on a few businesses in town, but threw no eggs, and on a Halloween prowl that had eight or nine passengers stuffed in a car - new car, new driver, no problems.

* I spent a summer in Creston after I finished grade twelve in 1957. Jean and I went to Lethbridge to visit Uncle Aksel and Aunt Ruth. We saw the 5000 acre farm leased land from the Blood Reserve that our uncles were involved in. Aksel and Ruth took us to Creston, in their new '57 Dodge with the big fins, to visit Grandma and Uncle Alf. Uncle Alf gave us cash for tickets for a flight from Cranbrook to Vancouver and Penticton back. We cruised around Vancouver with our cousin and her fiancé in his flashy convertible and flew to Penticton and back to Cranbrook. Our uncle later told mom that we returned the seven

dollars or so that was left over. We were zipped around Vancouver in our cousin's fiancé's convertible, and visited all the relatives. Jean returned to nursing school in Saskatoon, and I stayed in Creston, living with Grandma Farstad, working in the Creston Valley Motel, which Aunt Kae was managing. The motel was full of guys working on the microwave towers. Two were from Lithuania, brothers Hans and Ari, very nice guys. I went out with them to a beach party. That was the night before I was leave for home; my cousin Earl, a trucker, was going through Creston that night on his way to Ontario and the plan was he would take me as far as Swift current. But I didn't know the about the plans. He waited as long as he could, and had to leave without me. I felt really bad about that – still wish I could take that ride! I took the Greyhound.

A few days later I left home for University, with a five hundred dollar scholarship, three borrowed books and a cot in a basement bedroom (meals included), with a family I knew from Ethelton. I walked the cold twenty-one blocks to the campus; like girls those days, I wore skirts. I didn't have a real plan, except to be a teacher. I should have been an accountant or a geologist, I was fascinated with both. Guidance Counsellors hadn't been invented.

Ray was starting his third year at university, living in the dorm at St. Andrew's College. We had started dating in 1956. With little money between us, it was evenings in the library where, if you arrived early you could nab a small room for yourself to study, or go out for or cheap coffee and teacakes. We skated and played on a vicious broomball team, took in the snake dance which was part of frosh week, a line dance of students from the campus, over the University Bridge, down 2nd Avenue and through the theatres. We saw one movie that year (Witness for the Prosecution), and went to one formal on campus - I wore a bronze strapless dress with tulle of the same color, a hand-me-down from a Vancouver cousin. Ray got his Bachelor of Arts at the end of that term, 1958. He had his Diploma in Theology, but by this time he was reconsidering the ministry, which was more his grandfather's idea than his, and got his Diploma in Education as well.

That summer I stayed with Charlie and Ruth, and worked at the Melfort Creamery, issuing cream cheques. They trusted me enough to send me to the bank with a cheque for a thousand dollars, which I cashed, and went around the town paying the creamery's bills. That summer Ray worked on a rural mission field about 130 miles away. I made one week-end bus trip to visit (the only time I saw anyone shooting a rat in a kitchen) Ray came to Melfort on the motorcycle he had the use of for the summer. We buzzed out to Ethelton for the day, where I almost killed myself running the bike into the ditch....shouldn't one of us have known better?

****

Second year, in the College of Education, I lived with Joan (we went through school together) in a miserable second floor space that could not be called an apartment, owned and patrolled by a old vicious landlady. Ray didn't like her rules! We both were still virtually penniless. He was always good at managing to land on his feet, whether it was work, a place to live, or transportation. Case in point, borrowing cars: while in university he would take services for rural churches when he needed money, and always managed to borrow a car. On one occasion, when I was going with him, he locked the keys in the

borrowed Volkswagen when he came to pick me up. With the engine running and the owner and the out of town, what Ray do? Jog back to the dorm and manage to borrow another car, pick me up and hit the road. The VW was left to run out of gas. At the end of the day, the owner came with the keys and Ray paid him for the tank of gas.

Ray got his Bachelor of Education in 1959. That spring, and we bought our first car – from the Saskatoon Police Department's compound. Looking through its steel fence we chose a robins-egg blue two-door hard top Pontiac that had been abandoned on a city street; it had Nova Scotia plates and plenty of rust. We couldn't test drive it or even have a good look, but we bought it for two hundred dollars cash. It got us back and forth to Ethelton, around Saskatoon for his summer job, and to my school in north Saskatoon.

I finished the term with a Standard Teaching Certificate and a position with the Saskatoon School Board for the fall.

We were married on a hot, windy Wednesday afternoon. Ray's best college friend performed the ceremony. The reception was at mom and dad', and my aunt Hazel was there to help with wonderful little details. Ray and I had stood up for Jean and Gary when they were married in Saskatoon four months earlier. They were both living in Winnipeg so Ray and I had handled many of the details for them. Jean came from Nova Scotia to be my bridesmaid.

If you ask anyone who was there what they remember of our wedding you get one of two stories. One would be of the battered old flat-bed truck that was backed up to the church stairs when the service was over. We were forced to sit in the back of the truck on an old sofa to be driven around the town, but were kidnapped by friendlier kidnappers and whisked away.

The other would be the story of the robin-egg blue/rusty car. Ray was warned that his cousins had plans, so he hid the car in the bush. However, one of the cousins who an airplane, and found the car. When the wedding party went to the site, the car was sitting on its axles, covered with corn syrup and confetti. Charlie offered not only to clean the car, but to give us his car for our honeymoon. The fact that we ran out of gas less about fifteen minutes after we left is suspicious. Was he a double agent? He worked hard to clean up the car, and patched the holes in the sills while we were away.

We honeymooned in Waskesiu, thanks to the minister from Third Avenue who lent his cabin. We went to Lac La Ronge, and Candle Lake. For the rest of the summer we lived in Nipawin, another short-term job-and-house Ray found.

That's where I got my driver's license with the now dust-free Pontiac: in a small town, on a Saturday morning, on a street with only a single car for me to parallel park behind. I didn't tell the officer that I would be driving in Saskatoon the next week.

****

Soon we were living in a miserable basement suite in Sutherland, just out of Saskatoon, Ray still in University and I teaching, a job from hell, one I should not have been offered, given the circumstances.

I was given a grade three classroom with ten or more children being accelerated from grade one to grade three. At the first parent-teacher visit, one parent went to the principal asking ask why her child was in a grade three class not a grade two class. The

principal investigated and found that the parents had not been consulted, and worse, the children were not tested by the psychologist. In January the testing was done and fewer that half of that group qualified.

The decision was made that the best children be left in my class, which left me with three groups: regular grade threes, regular grade twos, and children coming out of a grade one class to be advanced to finish grade three. It didn't help that I was also taking a university night class on the English novel with lots of reading and essays. The psychologist's support was all that kept me there for the rest of the term. Apparently motherhood was more appealing than teaching; I was expecting by the end of the term.

Not willing to waste nine months, went back to university. I enrolled in a summer school class, sociology. Again, Ray had pulled it off: we left that basement suite to look after his great-aunt's house for the summer, and he had a part-time position with one of Saskatoon's biggest churches, Third Avenue United. I was nauseous most of the summer and he would pick me up every day after my class. We stopped often for me to throw up – where were those sills with the holes when we needed them?

My doctor gave me all kinds of meds, until I had a scary reaction one evening when I was alone (Ray playing soccer). The doctor came to the house with another drug that helped.

That fall, 1960, Ray was on campus in his final year of theology. Knowing that I would likely no longer have access to the university, I took two more classes during the winter term, American Literature and Biological Sciences. We were now living in a nice upstairs suite, with good friends living on the main floor. Doug was due in February, well before finals. But it didn't turn out that way - by late March there was no baby, and finals were coming up for both of us. My doctor suggested a dose of castor. My position was that I wasn't to go to the pharmacy asking for castor looking like a whale – if he would buy it, I would take it; and, yes, it works. Doug was born during Ray's five finals and my three.

Ray now had his Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Education and Diploma in Theology, and was ordained in June. We bought our first new car, a '61 blue Pontiac. His permanent position didn't start until September, so he pulled off another 'job- and- home' for the summer in Humboldt.

****

Climax, eight miles from the US border was flat, dry, hot and treeless. The municipality was called "Treelon", a reference to the lone tree 'growing' (actually, dying) out in the grassy prairie. It was a tourist attraction.

A welcoming community, it seemed to have an excess of eccentrics; one young man who lived there told us it was caused by the wind. It attracted rogue doctors: one who fired his guns in town occasionally, putting a bullet through his neighbour's front window and into her chesterfield, and another, who had malaria, but was an excellent doctor; he had a habit of disappearing. After going AWOL for a week he was cornered by the RCMP in someone's outdoor toilet, just across the tracks below our house. People trusted the hospital, but warned us to go to a doctor in Shaunavon. It had its wonderful, friendly people. Among the best were the two Customs Officers, the Reeds and the Stuarts. We kept in touch with them until both couples were gone. Whe she died in 2004 her will requested that Ray do her funeral, unfortunately he couldn't do it.

The first week we were there, the school superintendent came to our door, to offer me a teaching position – he had heard I was a teacher. He already had a baby-sitter lined up for me – he offered her the teaching or the babysitting; she chose the baby sitting so I got the teaching position, teaching math to grades nine to twelve, mornings only. Bill and June McNabb and their family were wonderful baby-sitters. They practically adopted Doug asking to keep him overnight, or take him to work. Bill was a bus driver. His route was to Swift Current and back via six or eight towns scattered long the border, (U S) and Doug did many of those day-long trips with them. For the record, the following June the superintend heard I was pregnant and needed another teacher! The downside of a small town.

While in Humboldt, we had, foolishly, acquired a dog named Patch. After we got settled in Climax, Patch arrived by bus in the same crate that Dad's dog Bonnie had arrived from Kamloops earlier that summer. Patch's claim to fame was escaping from home while we were curling. He barrelled across town, bullied himself into the rink and onto the ice, leaving pancake-sized globs of Climax clay down the sheet. He soon found work as a farm hand.

We made our first big trip in 1962 with our new car, picking up Allen, Olive and Arlene in Melfort, coming back to Climax and setting out to Seattle for the World Fair over the Going-To-The-Sun Highway. We slept in a tent and cooked our meals over a campfire. From there we went to Victoria to visit a pair of elderly eccentrics who were friends of both my mother and Ray's family.

Donna was born on in December during a dust storm. No local doctors for me, we drove to Shaunavon, watching high grasses along the ditches to keep us on the road. Ray and Doug stayed with friends there, and I was allowed to spend Christmas Day with them. That January was a very cold one in our draughty house, drapes fluttering in the wind from the windows. We took in farm children overnight when the busses couldn't run. That year I took Economics 101 by correspondence, with help from the Reeve of the municipality who had taken the same course. The new principal boarded with us.

Ray and his curling team won many bonspiels that winter; however, the church board felt that a minister shouldn't 'be winning that much' and suggested he break up the team. Four church services each Sunday, a round trip of 100 miles, all gravel, and many funerals made it a heavy load. I don't know if the curling issue had much to do with it, but he resigned. He applied, and got an offer, from Alberta College in Edmonton as a counsellor and teacher. Hearing his end of the phone call I couldn't believe him telling the principal that he could teach Latin. He had decided on the spot that he would take Latin at summer school at U of S. We made a quick trip to Edmonton for an interview and house hunting. Friends in Climax referred us to their nephew in Edmonton, a student it Alberta College, and a realtor, who helped us to find a house. He and his family, the McIver's became good friends.

****

We left Climax in 1963, with two children, a highchair and a crib, on our way to a summer in Saskatoon. Ray found another temporary house, the best ever, but not the last. For two months we lived in the elegant Netherlands Consulate, one of Ray's professors being the Dutch Consul to Saskatchewan. He and his family were in New York for the summer, he lecturing in Princeton, she visiting. We made one last visit to Ethelton,

and left in a rainstorm for Edmonton towing a U-Haul, half empty. Before that everything we owned fitted in our car. With a mortgage and an annual salary of $4000, were truly poor. I remember only three nights out for dinner in three years. We had our dart board, bought at Woodward's for three dollars, a floor curling set and a small pool table for entertainment. We could, however, afford to trade our Pontiac for a Polara. Ray taught Latin and Christian Education, was the Director of Counselling, and coached the track and field teams. I taught one summer class at Alberta College, grade ten French 10.

We lived three years in Meadowlark Park and one in Sherwood Park. That year I took a night course at the University of Alberta, French 200. I had trouble following the lecture in French, but the professor knew I was struggling and would throw in the odd English word for me. One evening during a break my seat-mate (a bit of a snob) asked him, What part of Paris are you from" – a rather snobby question. The prof laughed and said, "I'm from Hoey Saskatchewan!" Seeing this as my big opportunity, I said, "You must know my father in-law, Bill Morrison!"([redacted] he had to cancel the oral final because his mother died.

Memories of Edmonton: *our friendly, kid-filled cul-de-sac; *Story Valley Zoo; *Al Oeming's game farm; *wiener roasts in the parks with the Pearson's and Stacey's; *our first trip Banff with nine of us in McIver's station wagon; *our first trip to Jasper; *visitors: Ruth and Charlie, Olive, Allen, and their children along with Bill and Eva; the Stevensons and other Ethelton neighbours, the Elliott's who also brought Bill and Eva along; *our living room full of sleeping kids; *mom coming when Patty was born, even though she was also needed in Nova Scotia as Rob was born the same week; *classy events at Alberta College, especially Ray's assignment at convocation to escort the guest speaker, Charlotte Whitten, mayor of Ottawa, I tagging along, wearing my fantastic pink linen dress; *Doug attacked coming home from kindergarten, Grandpa Morrison there to rescue him; *the rusted English mini beater of a car Ray drove to work.

****

Ray's career at Alberta College ended when the new principal fired a well-liked dean, on dubious grounds. A number of staff resigned in protest, likely led by Ray. He had no qualms about expressing his opinions and acting when he felt people were being unfairly treated (or when working for a dunce). Moving on was a statement he made more than once in his career.

This took us to Wadena, Saskatchewan, another four-point rural pastorate. In this case he should have remembered that the last four-point rural pastorate he was in wasn't that pleasant. This new position was as an interim minister to help the congregation recover from a few bad years with the former minister. Curiously enough, that minister was Ray's second cousin and they had been a rival for years. Ray put in his resignation in March.

In Wadena I took an offer to teach Home Ec. part, from January to June in a somewhat dysfunctional school; I replaced Pamala Wallin's mother for six months. We did a lot of curling, and I took a correspondence course, Political Science, from the U. of S. Doug started grade one in Wadena.

Memories of Wadena: *going to the Pam-Am Games in Winnipeg, *fishing at Madge Lake; *camping at Greenwater Park with our really big, three room tent, only to find we were missing the hook that held up the canvas, Ray driving back the fifty or so miles to get it, the kids and I - Doug had friends along – keeping the fire burning late into the night; *our girls wanting to go to a wedding, knowing their dad did weddings all the time, I taking them to one, staying on the stairs outside, one of my girls asking, "mom, when's the baby going to come out?" This reminds me of Doug's first experience with weddings watching from our window in Climax; he afraid of the brides, thinking the kisses were bites, calling them "Grides". All the brides in Climax looked like big scary white birds because the wind was always blowing there.)

****

It was Easter 1968; Ray was soon to be out of work. Leaving the kids with grandparents, we went to Calgary where Ray had an interview with Indian Affairs. We drove to Morley, liked the mountains, and he was hired as an Education Counsellor. At the end of June we left for Alberta. Ray's cousin Merrill hauled our things in his farm truck. Ray drove the old gray VW wagon that had replaced the rusty Morris we left in Alberta, Doug rode with Ray or Merrill and I had the children and Happy, the car-sick beagle in the Polara. We stayed overnight in Calgary and unloaded everything the next morning into an empty classroom in the Morley school.

That summer was the best. We stayed free in the residence, stored our belongings there free, and had six weeks of free time. We travelled and had fun, first to Nelson B.C. where Ray and his curling team from Wadena were in the summer bonspiel. We were fifteen in all, Doug being the oldest of seven children, most of us tenting. I'm not sure it was fun for the kids. From there we toured southern B.C. We took a ferry across Kootenay Lake to Creston to see Grandma Farstad and Aunt Kae, to the Glass House, and went on to Fort Steele, Radium, Emerald Lake and Moraine Lake.

We got snowed on in our big tent in Banff. We explored Calgary, went to the Stampede decked out in new cowboy boots and hats. We hung around Happy Valley, fished at the Ghost River, played in Ryley Park and went up the Calgary Tower. It was on the bridge over the Bow River, in Morley that our Happy was killed; she was likely following our car as we drove out. We all had a cry. She was buried her on the reserve.

Around mid August, before he had worked a day, Ray was transferred to Gleichen. He argued for, and got, a free move of our belongings, and as a perk we got a house, and I was offered a position, in a county school or on the reserve. We had to scramble to get organized. Because I chose a position on the reserve I had to attend a week-long oriententation course in Morley. Ray was put to work early and had our kids to look after. He found a sitter for the kids, enrolled Doug and Donna school, and started work. His first responsibility was removing native children from the Anglican residence. He took them, one in each hand, the angry Anglican Canon scowling as they got into Ray's car. With the help of Adolphus Weaselchild, he found foster homes for all of the children. The school at the residence was closed at the same time, so every student on that area of the reserve had to be assigned to public school.

It was no small thing, as it involved three counties and many schools: Gleichen, Standard, Arrowwood, Mossleigh, Bassano, Carseland, Milo, Queenstown, Vulcan, Strathmore, and Rockyford.

Bus lines were organized, a lunch program was set up in the basement of the residence, operated by Blackfoot women. The process was complicated because quotas were allotted; the counties, which got tons of federal money allowed only so many natives per grade. Laying out the many bus routes was a huge project itself. Each bus would make its first stop at the residence to pick up lunches to deliver to the schools, and transfer students to their buses.

A week later, when I returned from Morley this big project was up and running. Ray had the help of two great people, Adolphus Weaselchild, who eventually became an Education Counsellor, and Ray Mills, who had the contract for the bussing. Ray even had time to drive the sixty miles to shop in Calgary with the kids; they surprised me when I got back with an electric dishwasher.

We ditched our gray VW, bought in Wadena, for a used green Ford. When Ray later got his government car we gave the Ford to his brother Allan, who was a self-taught master mechanic.

I was the principal of a two-room ESL - English as a Second Language - kindergarten and pre-kindergarten school, with a second teacher and two wonderful Blackfoot aides. Our classes were in the Old Sun Residence grounds, (the Canon didn't like me either).

During that time the University of Calgary started a program to train native teacher aides, and my aides and I were called in as consultants. Indian Affairs often sent us and our aides to meetings; we went to Calgary, Red Deer, Stand Off, the Blood Reserve and Morley. One week Ray and I had back-to back meeting at the Chateau Lacombe; I checked into the room as Ray was leaving.... Our poor kids!

While in Gleichen I took a summer university class, History of the English Language. That summer we lived for two weeks in a friends' house near the campus while they were away, and for the rest of the summer I stayed at Happy Valley in our new Travelaire trailer. Ray took the kids to Ethelton to their grandparents, and came back briefly. We went on a weekend holiday, canoeing on Lake Louise and climbing up to the glacier and the little cabin. Our poor kids!

In our last year in Gleichen I commuted the 120 mile round trip to U.of C. every Thursday night from September to April, to take my last university class. I barrelled down that not-yet divided Highway One in the Oldsmobile, trusting the truckers who flashed their tail lights when it was safe to pass them. No cell phones then, I knew if I got in trouble some trucker would come to my rescue. With one class to go for my B.A, I had to get clearance from U. of S. as I was graduating from there. My plan was to complete my major, English, that winter, but at the last minute that class was cancelled. The U. of S. had advised me to register for two classes, just in case. My back-up kicked in and I found myself taking Economics 350. So, it was me, a kindergarten teacher, against twelve bankers in suits, studying government finance. I aced the class, not because I understood public finance – I didn't even understand the presentation I had to make to the class, about the federal government's latest white paper - but I memorized all my outlines, and wrote three decent essays on the final. My big moment was seeing my name at the top of

the list when the marks were posted. I beat all those bankers; however a mark wasn't their goal.

In June 1970 we were off to Saskatoon for my convocation: a B.A. Cum Laude; that after marriage, four years in Saskatoon, three children, four teaching positions, fourteen classes on campus, two night schools, two summer schools, two correspondence classes, nine places called home, and nine moves. Our poor kids!

The years with the federal government were the best: we had good friends and colleagues in Gleichen and with Indian Affairs, and were finally enjoying decent salaries.

Those were great years, the era of pant suits, mini dresses, clunky shoes and panty-hose!!! (One of Ray's supervisors called them 'No-Way-Hosé).I loved my mini skirts, and (finally!) slacks. Ahh that black pant suit with the long white scarf!

The culture within Indian Affairs, at least in the Calgary District was positive and friendly; we worked with great people. There were frequent opportunities to get together with everyone in Education, often at the homes of top staff. We had a great superintendent who kept his staff happy, but also knew to get rid of dead wood. Case in point: When Ray complained about his useless secretary the superintendent didn't fire her, he transferred her up north to the office of someone he had a grudge against: two birds with one stone!

He was cagey, and got away with it because he made things work and made people happy. When he sent Ray to Morley as a principle for three months, there was a perk, a government car Ray didn't qualify for. When he wanted to hire a promising counsellor but was denied funds he pulled it off because he had held back a payroll number from my kindergarten at Old Sun. So, every second Friday this man drove the sixty miles, in his government car, to pick up his cheque, which came in my payroll bag. He would hang around till quitting time. None of the brass noticed that he wasn't a kindergarten teacher. I'd argue that the superintendent's doings made for a happy, willing staff.

*Memories of Blackfoot: *Rays assistants, Roslyn Breaker, Adolph Weaselchild, and Floyd Royal; *Floyd taking us to see the Blackfoot Burial Grounds, somewhere east along the Bow River - I don't think many non-natives have been there. *Cassie a native at the Eden Valley reserve: when Ray hired her at the school she was so grateful she wanted to surprise him with a pair of moccasins that she would make herself. Needing to know his foot size, she traced his feet on paper – end of surprise. When Ray discovered that she was getting more money that was allotted and had to cut her salary – no moccasins! *the pow-wows, *listening to the drumming at night, *the odd house we lived in, once the RCMP barracks, complete with two offices, a jail, and a small door that opened from the office to the upstairs to put the phone there for the night, * the time we got the runaway gerbil from under the freezer using the vacuum cleaner; we couldn't leave him there because we were off for Montana. *lying awake all night the night of Apollo 13. * our summer trips to Missoula,

****

When Ray was transferred to the Calgary office we moved to acreage near High River. Ray worked out of the Customs Building that housed Indian Affairs and other federal departments. He was the department's go-to for fixing people-problems. For three

months he commuted daily to the Morley School, as a principal, and when that problem was solved he covered things at Eden Valley and Blackfoot.

I taught junior high in Blackie in a small school, with a poor principal and amazing teachers, students and parents. Discovering that commuting – forty miles round trips for both of us, and looking after acreage was too much, and we moved to Calgary. We bought our house for thirty-nine thousand and sold it a year later for something like sixty thousand.

Ray was offered another position, this one in Ottawa, delivered in person from someone sent from Ottawa, who came to our house. Ray's answer was no, and he was then offered a position in the provincial headquarters of the Indian Affairs n Edmonton. . Preferring to work directly with the natives, he chose a position in Rocky Mountain House, working with Sunchlild-Ochiese, Big Horn, and Mackinaw Camp, the breakaway band from Hobbema that tented in the bush west of Rocky Mountain House.

Finding him home early one afternoon was a surprise. He had resigned. Again. His reason, a proposal he had worked on with the native Education Committee was turned down by the Calgary office, by the person who had replaced him there. Ray knew his proposal met all the conditions because he had approved, improved or dismissed many such proposals.

As luck would have it, my supervisor had asked me a few days earlier if I knew anyone who could set up and run an off-school resource room for struggling teenage students. I recommended Ray, and he was hired the next day. Resource rooms were the latest fad at that time, so when we decided to move to Red Deer we were both able to get such positions later with Red Deer County.

*Memories of Rocky: *The American hippie teachers who flocked to Rocky Mountain House, after hearing about the 1967 canoe journey from Rocky to Ottawa. * The many trips to the west country and to the reserves. *helping our friends to butcher a cow, buying a half. *curling – we were good! even with our children in the mixed league. *Ray still curling with his Calgary team, friends at the Customs Building, going off to Calgary to curl, and to a Govt. of Canada competition in Saskatoon. *Stories of Sasquatches from the natives and men who worked on the Abraham Dam. *The smashing surprise farewell party all the Government employees in Rocky through for us.

We were fortunate. It's a was wonderful, charmed life.

From here our children know the rest of the story.......

A TRIP TO BRANDON

My earliest family trip was to Brandon, Manitoba in 1945. We went because dad's father was ill. For some reason dad was required to have identification on the truck to make the trip. I remember it coming back from Melfort with a lovely professionally-done sign reading "HIGHLAND CREEK FARM, J.D. PATERSON, ETHELTON, SASK". Dad had no middle name, so the "D" must have referred to Dena.

The four of us travelled in the farm truck. Jean and I rode in the back, and Bob, who was three, tells me that what he best remembers about the whole trip was being peeved because he had to stay in the cab. With a heavy feather quilt, a few blankets, and occasional turns in the cab, Jean and I hunkered down to stay warm, or stood just behind the cab, our hair and our little cheeks flapping in the wind.

The Paterson lived on a farm near Kelloe, in a two-story house, quite elegant compared to our little shack: an upstairs, staircase, dining room with a large table, and a veranda – all were new to me. We were a large group at the table, and the serving dishes were special because – if I remember correctly – they came from dad's grandmother's factory in Glasgow (?). One of the pieces is in my buffet now.

Dad's brother Jim and his wife Marjorie lived in a small house in the farmyard with their sons Jack and Brian. The big event was Jack spraining his ankle as we kids were jumping off the veranda steps; all jumping had to halt immediately.

Uncle Bill took us to a park near Birtle, and to Winnipeg to visit dad's aunt Nellie and cousin Kathy. While shopping in Eaton's department store we lost Jean. Bob and I were sequestered in a clerk's cubicle while everyone else fanned out to look for her. She had followed a woman, whose coat looked like Grandma's, out the store and down the street. Realizing she was lost, she calmly asked a woman how to get to 867 Downing Street, Nellie's address. The woman took her there, Nellie and she phoned Eaton's, and we were all reunited. That's Jean, savvy and cool.

Jean and I got dolls with sawdust and glue heads, arms and feet, and stuffed bodies. When we got back to Kelloe Uncle Bill couldn't get the trunk open and I thought I'd never see my doll again. Told she needed a name, I chose 'Mary' and used ink to write her name on her fabric back. I didn't like the name I chose or the messy inky label. She was soon abandoned.

I also had a Kewpie doll, a cherub. She smelled of some chemical, left a nasty taste on my hands and had little budding wings on her back. With that disability she couldn't wear clothes or be cuddled, and her wings poked me in bed. I wasted no love on dolls.

A TRIP TO VANCOUVER

After the war ended in 1945 mom and dad were able to build a new house before that, almost everything was needed to fight the war). Two of Mom's brothers helped; Carl, was a draftsman living in Vancouver and Alf owned a sawmill in Creston. So, just before Christmas in 1946 Mom, Jean, Bob and I were off to Vancouver. It was our first train ride, and a great one. We went to Saskatoon, stayed overnight at the Senator Hotel, boarded a CNR train the next morning that took us through Edmonton, the Yellowhead Pass and Jasper – and, yes we saw the statue of Jasper the Bear. The route was through Kamloops.

What an experience for us, travelling through the Rockies in winter, sleeping in upper berths, dining elegantly with white linen and fine cutlery, going from car to car, through the train, handling those heavy doors, standing on the outdoor platform at the end of the train – did we go through the baggage car? Maybe the conductor took us out there to see scenery we couldn't believe.

We met new relatives, two sets of aunts and uncles, and four cousins. Mom's sister and their family owned a storage and moving business, running it out of a building that had been earlier had been two stores, and they all lived in there, as did one other aunt. We kids were entertained by our cousins, Shelagh, Murrill, Earl, and Wesley. Both of the men had just come home from the war. Earl had been in the Air Force, in eastern Canada. Wesley was in the tank corps, in Europe, crossing the Rhine, near the end of the war, opening concentrations camps. Later, in Canada he was a member of the Governor-General's Foot guards.

We were awed by mountains all around, by the big city, big buildings, street cars, and movies! – We saw our first one movie, State Fair.

The trip home was on the CPR line because we were stopping in Creston. This took us on the Kettle Valley Railroad, which was the more exciting line. It's said that the train from Vancouver left in the evening so passengers would not see the wild territory they were travelling through, and, yes, we left in the evening and were soon tucked into our berths. Next morning the conductor placed us where we could see "something interesting" – looking out the window we could see the engine and the last car at the same time because of the curved trestle we were on, and it was a long way down! This was the Canyon Creek Trestle. It was 200 m. long, and 55 m. high. This line had 43 bridges, 12 tunnels, and 15 snow sheds. It is the most expensive section of any railroad in the world, at $84, 525 per km. The route was what the Coquahalla highway is now.)............back to my story..........

Mom's mother and her other brother Aksel lived in Creston. We stayed with Grandma while Uncle Alf worked on the spec's for the lumber. Creston was a muddy, dismal little town. That's where we got the measles, one by one, which extended the trip. Home took us through Revelstoke, the Kicking Horse Pass, Banff, Calgary, Swift Currant, Regina, and Melfort. We arrived home in February. The lumber?? It arrived much later via the railroad. It had to "cure" in a shed, I believe, in Creston, and maybe spend time in the dry air of the prairies. The house was started in 1949 and was not 'finished' until mom moved out.

THE SUMMER OF THE BEES

Uncle Nichol (Nels) was the Uncle we knew best because he was the last to leave Saskatchewan. He was the second Farstad child, born in Norway in 1898. In 1929 he was working on an oil tanker that caught fire in Boston Harbour. He was able to get off the ship, but was seriously burned by burning oil slicks on the water as he surfaced for air. His head face, chest and arms were badly scarred, and his nose, ears and eyelids burned off. He was not expected to live and was in hospital in Boston for many months.

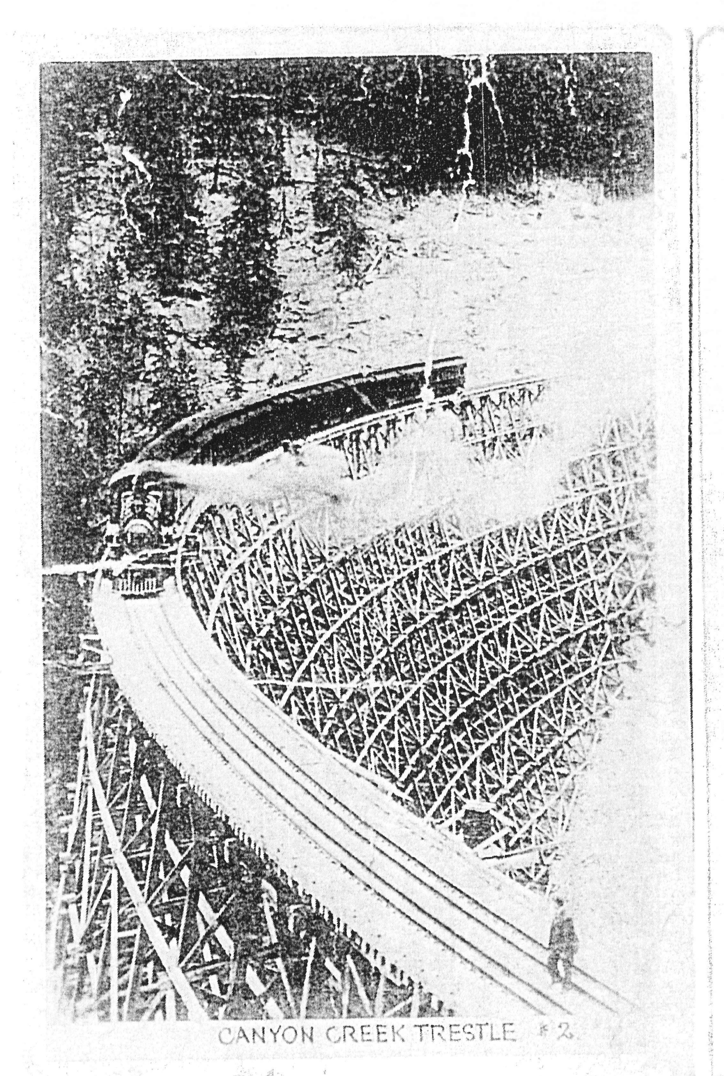
He married his fiancée, Violet, in 1931 and she died of heart disease in 1939. After that he was a drifter of sorts. He was a grain buyer in Yellow Creek, on the same CNR line as dad.

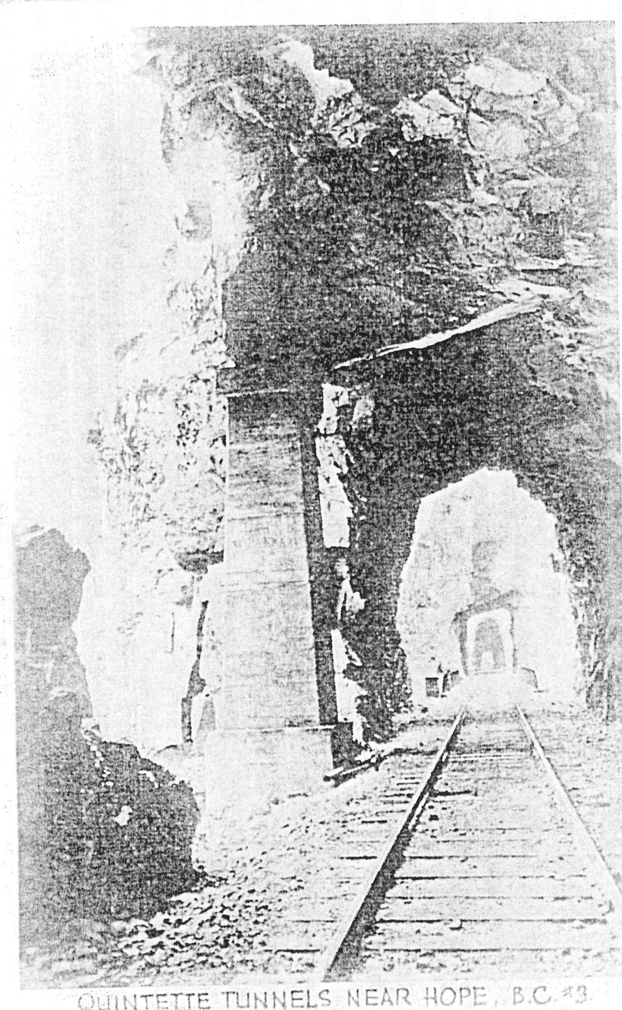
At some point he was off to California, joining some society that turned out to be a cult; he told us was warned by a stranger on the beach to get out if he could. Back in Canada, he worked at Sundance Farms, land the Farstad brothers leased from the Blood Tribe in Southern Alberta. He worked at his brother's sawmill in Creston, and on a cotton farm in Arizona with his sister Kae and her husband. Much later in life he went back to California, remarried, and passed away there.

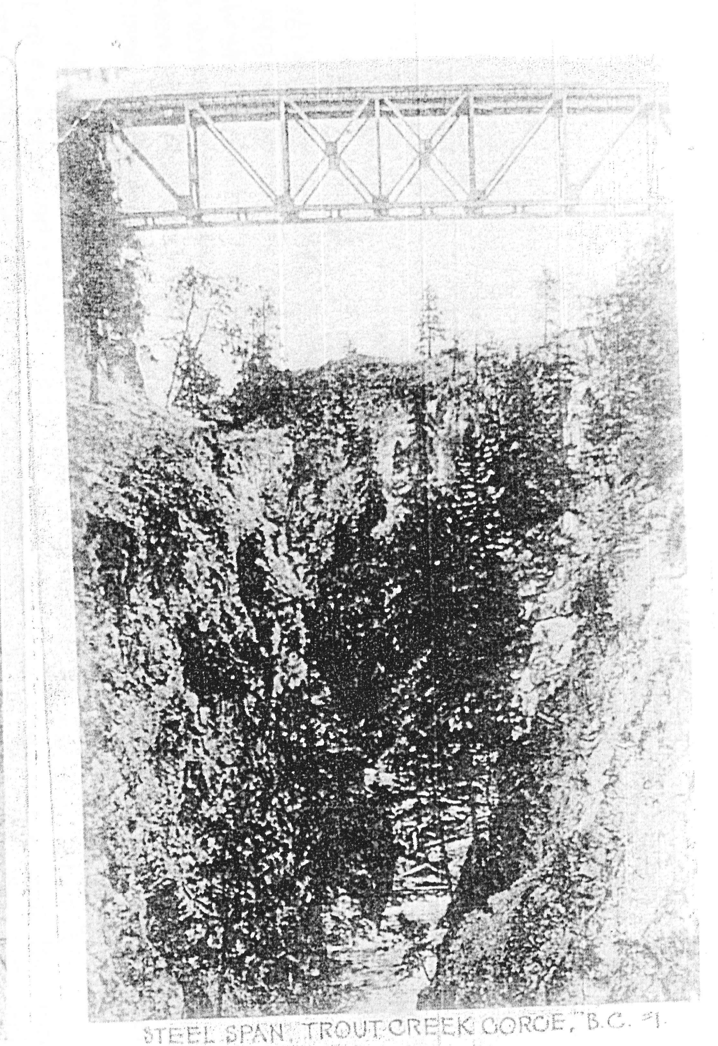
However, we got to know him best when in '40's when he worked the Farstad quarter before it was sold, Grandma being in Creston by then. He lived in the old house with his Scotty dog, Throckmorton Gildersleeve, a.k.a Throcky, and the big deer-head mounted on the landing at the bottom of the stairs. He drove a neat little coupe.

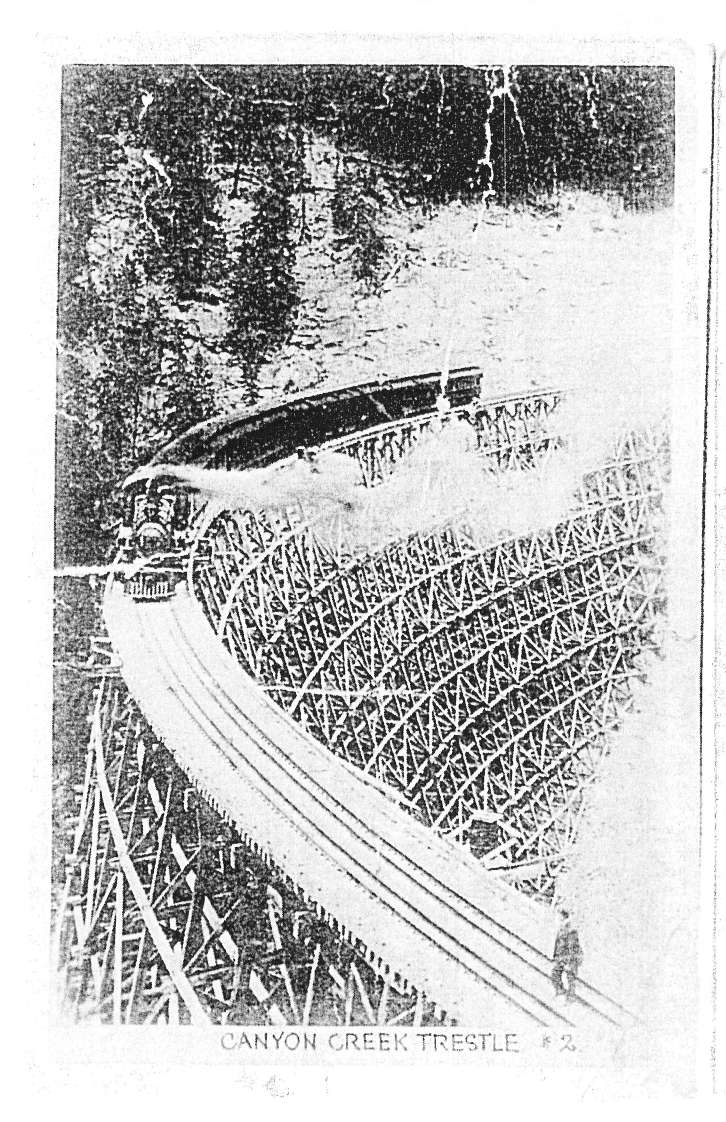
He became a bee-keeper, with his supers scattered all around the countryside. Riding in the rumble seat as he toured the country to check on the supers was the best thing in the world, except for the occasionally night rides when those exquisite blue running lights in the cab were shining. Watching him capture a swarm of bees bare-armed was amazing; perhaps his scars protected him.

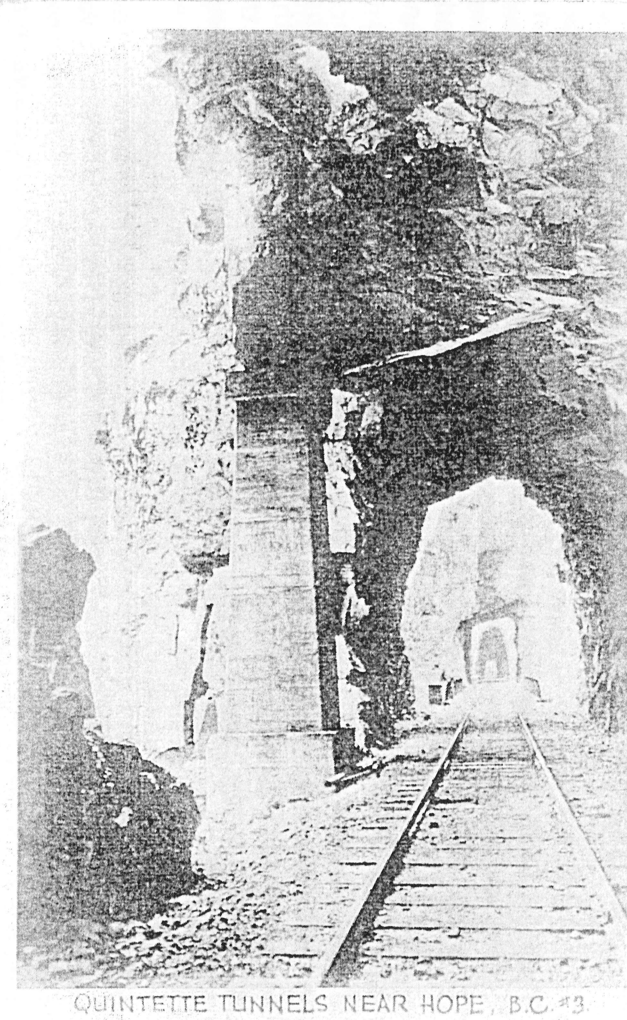
He helped with the construction of our new farm house, running his bee business from the shack in the barnyard. Ray and his friend Bill worked for him that summer. That's how we got our first bicycle, a beautiful red bike with balloon tires and a big basket. Bill rode it to work, and would let us ride it. Big mistake! Jean and I headed down the road one day, she pedalling and I sitting on the handle bars. We lost control, hit the ditch, crashed into a culvert, blew the front tire and bent the frame. Bill sold it to us for $25 and Uncle Nichol repaired it. We didn't learn anything from that experience: later we tried riding teeter-totter style with a plank over a 45 gallon barrel. Unsuccessfully. Obviously Ray knew better than offer his bicycle!

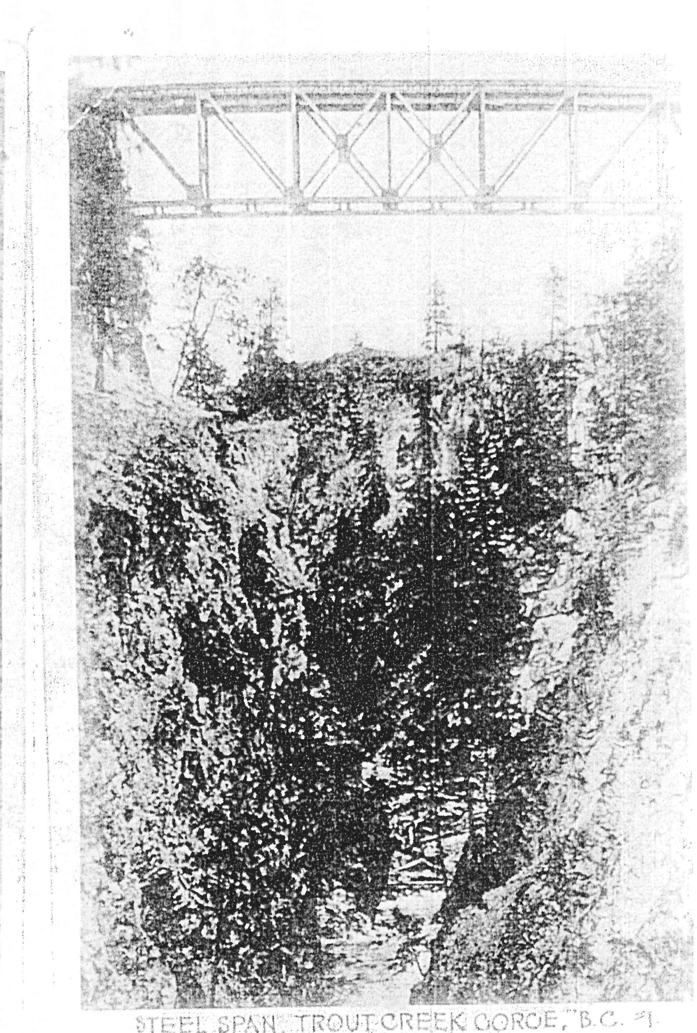

CANYON CREEK TRESTLE #2


QUINTETTE TUNNELS NEAR HOPE, B.C. #3


STEEL SPAN, TROUT CREEK GORGE, B.C. #1


CANYON CREEK TRESTLE #2

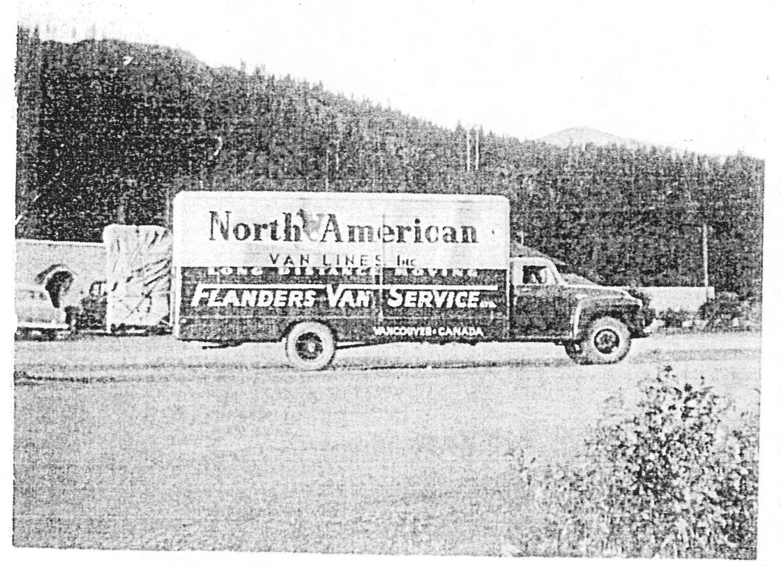

QUINTETTE TUNNELS NEAR HOPE, B.C. #3

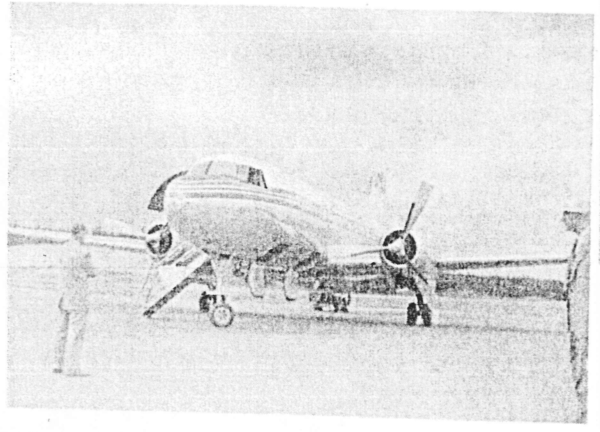

STEEL SPAN, TROUT CREEK GORGE, B.C. #1

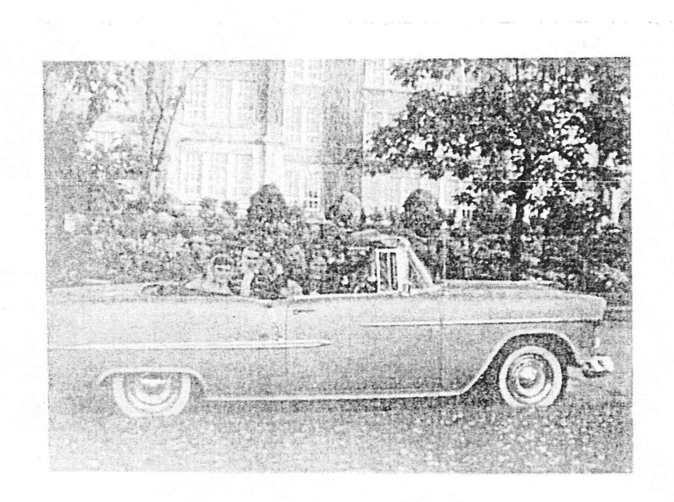
The year I finished high school Jean and I went to Lethbridge to visit Uncle Aksel. He and Aunt Ruth took us to Creston in his new '58 Dodge, to visit Grandma, and Uncle Alf and his family. Uncle Alf gave us money to take a bus to Cranbrook and a plane to Vancouver to see relatives there. We enjoyed cruising around Vancouver in Murrill's fiancé's convertible, seeing all the sights, and getting new hairdos. We flew back to Cranbrook and took the bus back to Creston. Alf told mom later that Jean gave him the eight dollars that were left over.

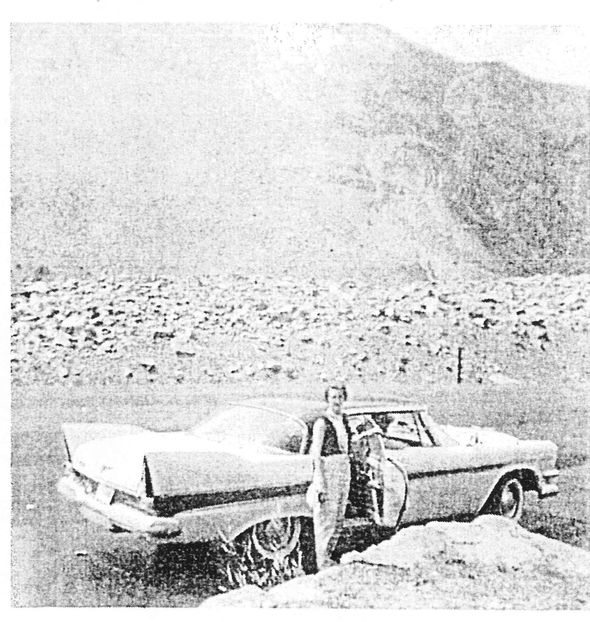
Jean had to get back to Saskatoon for classes, and I stayed to work for Aunt Kae in her motel, which at the time was filled with men working on the microwave towers that were just going up. The brothers from Lithuania were nice young men; we went to the top of Goat Mountain to see the view, and to a beach party.

Earl was on his way to Toronto with his North American moving van, and the plan was for me to ride to Swift Currant with him, but no-one told me, I was out, he couldn't wait for me, and I felt bad, missing that.









This is a story my Uncle Aksel Farstad told Ray and I at our wedding: He, Eva, and Bill Morrison were riding together in an open sleigh on a cold winter day. Eva was sitting the middle. Aksel was holding her hand, and he pulled her hat down over her face. When she let go of his hand, not Bill's, to adjust her hat, he knew she wouldn't be his bride. -Lucill